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THE FLOWER OF FLAME

"Un amour taciturne et toujours menacé."—De Vigny

I

Foamless the gradual waters well
From the sheer deep where darkness lies,
Till to the shoulder rock they swell
With a slow cumulance of sighs.

O waters, gather up your strength
From the blind caves of your unrest;
Loose your load utterly at length
Over the moonlight-marbled breast.

There sleep, diffused, the long dim hours—
Nor let your love-locks be withdrawn
Till round the world-horizon flowers
The harsh inevitable dawn.

II

We watched together
The sun-shaft pierce
The smoking weather;
The hail-blasts fierce

One moment illumine
That waste so cold—
Iris'd sheets of spume,
Wild welter of gold!

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The gaunt gulls flying
Were backward tossed,
Their cruel crying
In uproar lost.

She flung aside
Her fettering cloak,
Made of her wide
Strong arms a yoke;

Calling, "Haste, lover,
Outstrip the hours—
It soon will be over,
This love of ours!"

Drove on my face
Kisses like cries,
Gazed as to trace
Light in blind eyes;

Broke with strange laughter
Headlong away,
Before nor after
Ever so gay!

III

All is estranged today,
Chastened and meek.
Side by side taking our way,

Robert Nichols

With what anguish we seek
To dare each to face the other or even to speak!

The sun, like an opal, drifts
Through a vaporous shine;
Or overwhelms itself in dark rifts
On the sea's far line.
Sheer light falls in a single sword like a sign.

The sea, striving in its bed
Like a corpse that awakes,
Slowly heaves up its lustreless head.
Crowned with weeds and snakes,
To strike at the shore, baring fangs as it breaks.

Something threatening earth
Aims at our love.
Gone is our ignorant mirth,
Love like speech of the dove.
The Sword and the Snake have seen and proclaim now,
"Enough!"

IV

The moon behind high tranquil leaves
Hides her sad head;
The dwindled water tinkles and grieves
In the stream's black bed.
And where now, where are you sleeping?

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The shadowy night-jar, hawking gnats,
Flickers or floats;
High in still air the flurrying bats
Repeat their wee notes.

And where now, where are you sleeping?

Silent lightning flutters in heaven,
Where quiet crowd,
By the toil of an upper whirlwind driven,
Dark legions of cloud.

In whose arms now are you sleeping?

The cloud makes, lidding the sky's wan hole,
The world a tomb;
Far out at sea long thunders roll
From gloom to dim gloom:

In whose arms now are you sleeping?

Rent clouds, like boughs in darkness, hang
Close overhead;
The foreland's bell-buoy begins to clang
As if for the dead:

Awake they where you are sleeping?

The chasms crack; the heavens revolt;
With tearing sound
Bright bolt volleys on flaring bolt;
Wave and cloud clash; through deep, through vault,
Huge thunders rebound!

But they wake not where you are sleeping.

Robert Nichols